Upper-Story Chapels near the Sanctuary in Churches
of the Christian East

Natalia Teteriatnikov

The origin and function of subsidiary chapels have recently attracted the attention of a number of scholars. This article aims to produce further architectural evidence and to discuss their function in more detail. G. Babić, for instance, discussed their funerary function,[1] S. Ćurčić their Middle Byzantine development,[2] and T. Mathews their use for private liturgies.[3] In these works scholars have dealt solely with chapels built at ground level; there has been no study of the origin, evolution, and function of upper-story chapels at the eastern end of churches, which is the subject of this article. The earliest churches known to have been built with upper-story chapels are in Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and the Caucasus. The churches that were built in Constantinople during the seventh and eighth centuries were all destroyed, which makes the Caucasian ones built at that time all the more important for filling a gap in our knowledge.[4]

Two Middle Byzantine churches illustrate the use of roof chapels associated with the tripartite eastern end of a church: the church at Dereağzı (ninth century) in Asia Minor and the monastery church of the Theotokos of Lips (907) in Constantinople. Access at Dereağzı is through the galleries (Fig. 1);[5] in the church of Constantine Lips access to the eastern chapels is through the gallery, but there is disagreement about how one reached the upper-story chapels at the eastern end (Figs. 2, 3).[6] At present they seem isolated and without access. This could mean that additional walkways were built, as reconstructed by A. Megaw, or roof galleries, as suggested by N. Brunov.[7] Even so, similarities in the shape and plan of the roof chapels in both churches suggest that they had a similar function. In both churches the chapels are provided with apses. Moreover, the Lips chapels contain the remains of liturgical furnishings, altars, and portions of the chancel stylobates.[8] The private character and liturgical function of the Lips chapels were illustrated by Mathews,[9] but Byzantinists took the position that these chapels were unique and overlooked the upper-story chapels that exist in the early architecture of Syria, Egypt, Palestine, Armenia, and Georgia.

In fact, the location of chapels in an upper story was customary in early churches in these regions. Many show chapels flanking the eastern apse, and these chapels may have two stories. The appear-

[1] G. Babić, *Les chapelles annexes des églises byzantines: Fonction liturgique et programme iconographique* (Paris, 1969); reviewed by S. Ćurčić, *ArtB* 55 (1973), 448–51; critical notes on the limitation of Babić's study to the funerary function of subsidiary chapels by T. Mathews, "'Private' Liturgy in Byzantine Architecture: Toward a Reappraisal," *CahArch* 30 (1982), 125–38.

[2] S. Ćurčić, "Architectural Significance of Subsidiary Chapels in Middle Byzantine Churches," *JSAH* 36 (1977), 94–110.

[3] Mathews, "'Private' Liturgy."

[4] Literary sources refer to the existence of oratories in the galleries of H. Sophia; Mathews, "'Private' Liturgy," 136. These were probably built later; the overall plan of H. Sophia does not reserve space for chapels. Two chapels found in the easternmost ends of the galleries of H. Irene do not form a tripartite eastern end of the church as, for example, in the church of the Theotokos of Lips monastery.

[5] James Morganstern, *The Byzantine Church at Dere Adğzı*, diss. (New York University, 1973), 53–55 and fig. 25; pub. as *The Byzantine Church at Dereağzı and Its Decoration*, IM 29 (Tübingen, 1983).

[6] A. Megaw, "The Original Form of the Theotokos Church of Constantine Lips," *DOP* 18 (1964), 279–98.

[7] On access to the eastern chapels, see ibid., 292–95 and 293, fig. G; N. Brunov, "K voprosu o srednjevekovoi arkhitekturi Konstantinopolja," *VizVrem* 28 (1968), 178–87, figs. 8, 17, 18.

[8] T. Macridy, "The Monastery of Lips and the Burials of the Palaeologi," *DOP* 18 (1964), 253–78, figs. 24–27.

[9] Mathews, "'Private' Liturgy."

ance of tripartite eastern ends in Syrian churches has usually been explained as a development from the triple sanctuaries found in some pagan temples in Syria and elsewhere in the Christian East.[10] Two-story rooms have, for example, been found near the central apse in two Roman temples, that of Tyche at is-Sanamen in South Syria (ca. A.D. 197) and that of Bel (ca. A.D. 32) in Palmyra.[11] At the temple of Tyche only the south chamber has an upper-story room, but the temple of Bel has two upper-story chambers with a staircase connecting them to the lower chambers (Figs. 4a, b).

H. C. Butler considered pagan temples and buildings to be antecedents for the architectural design of Syrian churches;[12] the upper-story chapel near the sanctuary may have been appropriated from pagan practice by Christian architects. The temple of Bel provided archeological evidence that it was transformed into a Christian church in the fourth or fifth century,[13] but this is not the case with most monuments, which are purely Christian. In order to understand the purpose of these chapels one must analyze their architectural arrangements and their furnishings.

Two-story eastern chapels can be found in two types of churches, those with galleries and those without. I shall first deal with churches that have galleries or some kind of loggia. I have already considered the Middle Byzantine church of De-reağzı, and shall now turn to some of the Early Christian churches in Syria, Egypt, Palestine, and Asia Minor.

Three basilicas at Shivta in Palestine, dating to the sixth century, provide a good example. Although the churches are in ruins, there is enough archeological evidence to reconstruct the access to the chapels.[14] In the north basilica at Shivta, for example, the lateral, recessed apses still have up-

per-story chapels above them (Fig. 5). But since there is no trace of communication between the upper-story chapels and the lower level, access must have been through the galleries. Unfortunately these are not preserved, but on the north side of the atrium there was a stairway that led to them.[15] The galleries, then, provided access to the upper-story chapels.

Alternatively, access could be by loggias. Some Syrian and Armenian churches were provided with side porches with open loggias above, which also linked the eastern and western upper-story chapels.

Ereruk, an Armenian basilica dating to the fifth and seventh centuries, is a good example of the use of loggias as access to the chapels (Fig. 6).[16] In its plan and architectural vocabulary this church is rooted in the Syrian tradition of church buildings such as Qalb Lozeh. The central nave of Ereruk terminates in a spacious apse with rectangular two-story chapels on either side; it has no galleries. While lower chambers near the sanctuary were entered through doors facing the narrow aisles, the upper-story chambers (now destroyed) could only be reached through passageways on the roof of the south and north porches. These porches ran to a similar pair of two-story chapels, set in the corners of the west facade of the building.

Access to upper-story chapels was also through private galleries. Kvela-Tsminda, a two-domed basilica at Gurjaani in Georgia (eighth century), had two-story eastern chapels (Fig. 7),[17] access to which was from the exterior. On the ground floor the north and south chapels were entered through the aisles, and since the north one was used as a prothesis, it was connected to the central apse by a passageway.[18] Above the ground floor, two chapels were built at the gallery level. The galleries in this church were built as independent units, separated from the central nave by a solid wall with shallow windows on each side; thus people in the galleries

[10] The question of the origin of the tripartite arrangement of the eastern end of Syrian churches and their links with earlier pagan temples was first raised by H. C. Butler, "Nabatean Temple Plans of Syrian Churches," *Studien zur Kunst des Osten* [*for*] *Josef Strzygowski* (Vienna-Hellerau, 1923), 9–16. See also R. Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture* (Baltimore, 1975), 151.

[11] H. C. Butler, *Early Churches in Syria, Fourth to Eleventh Centuries* (Princeton, 1929), 14, 15, and fig. 6A; H. Seyrig et al., *Le temple de Bel à Palmyre* (Paris, 1975), esp. 47, 48, 53–55, 149–60, and pls. 1–5, 51–57, 71–77.

[12] Butler, *Early Churches*, 10–17.

[13] Seyrig et al., *Le temple de Bel à Palmyre*, 157–60; A. Ovadiah, *Corpus of the Byzantine Churches in the Holy Land* (Bonn, 1970), 165–68, 201, figs. 167–69, pls. 67, 68; Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, 278, 279, and fig. 279.

[14] Seyrig et al., *Le temple de Bel à Palmyre*, 157–60.

[15] Ovadiah, *Corpus*, 166–68 and pl. 6.

[16] A. Khatchatrian, *L'architecture arménienne du IVe au VIe siècle* (Paris, 1971), 45–48, pl. 8a; for bibliography see p. 45.

[17] G. Chubinashvili, *Arkhitektura Kakhetii* (Tbilisi, 1959), 273–86, figs. on pp. 276, 277, 279, 281, 283; Sh. Amiranashvili, *Istoriya gruzinskogo iskusstva*, I (Moscow, 1963), 138–39; V. Beridze, *Gruzinskaya arkhitektura* (Tbilisi, 1967), 14, 41, fig. 15, pls. 43, 44; idem, *Drevnegruzinskaya arkhitektura* (Tbilisi, 1974), 119, 120; R. Mepisaschwili and W. Zinzadse, *Die Kunst des alten Georgien* (Leipzig-Berlin-Zurich/Freiburg, 1977) (hereafter M-Z), 99, 101, 106, figs. 120, 121; A. Alpago-Novello et al., *Art and Architecture in Medieval Georgia* (Milan-Louvain-la-Neuve-Tbilisi, 1980), 338, figs. 373–76.

[18] Chubinashvili, *Arkhitektura Kakhetii*, fig. on p. 276.

could not participate in the services held in the main church. These galleries were reached from the exterior by a stairway on the south facade of the church above the entrance door. The stairs are destroyed now, but traces of their masonry can still be seen in the four original archways on the south wall.[19] The separation of the galleries from the nave indicates that they were not intended for the public but rather for clergy to reach the chapels. These little gallery-chapels had deep horseshoe-shaped apses at their eastern ends, and although the north apse has a late altar—it is made of smaller bricks than the original altar in the main apse—it probably replaced an original one.[20]

The conspicuous feature in the first type of upper-story chapels, whether access was by galleries or loggias, is their private character. The chapels are very small, and their entrances in the basilica of Kvela-Tsminda are too narrow to serve the general public.

The second type of church has two-story eastern chapels but no galleries. The absence of galleries apparently complicated the problem of access to the rooms on the upper level, but this type of chapel arrangement was common in Egypt, Syria, Georgia, and Armenia.

The church at Deir el-Abiad in Egypt, built in 440 and reconstructed sometime in the sixth century, might be said to straddle the two groups:[21] galleries are present but do not provide access to the upper-story chapels in the northeast corner. The sanctuary in this church is a spacious triconch (with the bishop's throne in the central apse) (Figs. 8, 9), but the eastern walls of the lateral apses have doorways leading to rooms hidden in the southeast and northeast corners. A staircase near the northeast corner leads to the second-story rooms. Though Deir el-Abiad was a monastery (according to Shenute's *Lives*),[22] the people were allowed to attend church services on Saturday and Sunday. On these days the galleries and aisles were intended for use by the general public, including women,[23]

whom the monks were to avoid. They achieved this by restricted access to the upper-story chapels. Indeed, many areas communicate only through the triconch areas which were reserved for members of the clergy. This type of communication between lower- and upper-story chapels was also common in Syria and in churches of the Caucasus.

Three churches in the monastic site at Rusafa are of particular interest. While second-story chapels in basilica B are for the most part ruined, the monumental, towerlike chapels in basilica A and the tetraconch cathedral still survive.[24] Upper-story chapels are often found in Syria in basilica-type churches with triple eastern ends (as in Rusafa A and B), but the tetraconch churches with two-story chapels require a different solution.

The tetraconch cathedral at Rusafa, which was built around 480–520, has upper-story chapels on either side of the main sanctuary (Figs. 10, 11).[25] The rooms on the ground level have usually been designated as prothesis and diakonikon because they both had passageways to the sanctuary. However, these rooms flanking the apse are rectangular and have small but deep apses, and the north apse could be a baptistery since it has a round font, so small in size that it was possibly used for children.[26] A question therefore arises regarding the use of the other lateral rooms. In the passageway linking each of these to the sanctuary, there is a stairway built within the thickness of the lateral walls of the sanctuary. By these stairs one can reach the chambers on the upper level.[27] This system of communication, Roman in origin, was widely used by architects of Constantinople and in Syria, Egypt, Armenia, and Georgia. Both upper chapels in the tetraconch church have rectangular apses, and in both chapels steps survive which served as the chancel barrier.[28] Both chapels may thus originally have been furnished for celebrating the liturgy.

The towerlike appearance of the upper-story

[19] Ibid., figs. on pp. 281, 283; M-Z, *Die Kunst des alten Georgien*, figs. on pp. 120, 121.

[20] Chubinashvili, *Arkhitektura Kakhetii*, 274, 275, and note 1 on p. 275.

[21] C. C. Walters, *Monastic Archaeology in Egypt* (Warminster, 1974), 27; Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, 122–24, fig. 71.

[22] Walters, *Monastic Archaeology in Egypt*, 36, 37.

[23] T. F. Mathews, *Early Churches of Constantinople: Architecture and Liturgy*, 2nd ed. (University Park-London, 1977), 130–32. Mathews thinks that, although women sat in the galleries during the time of Justinian, archeologists go too far in assigning all such space to women.

[24] Krautheimer, *Early Christian and Byzantine Architecture*, 274–77, figs. 221–23; H. Spanner and S. Guyer, *Rusafa* (Berlin, 1926); J. Kollwitz, "Die Grabungen in Resafa," *Neue deutsche Ausgrabungen im Mittelmeergebiet und im Vorderen Orient* (Berlin, 1959), 45–70; "Die Grabungen in Resafa 1952," *JDAI, AA* 69 (1954), 119–38; "Die Grabungen in Resafa Herbst 1954 und Herbst 1956," *JDAI, AA* 72 (1957), 64–109; "Die Grabungen in Resafa frühjahr 1959 und Herbst 1961," *JDAI, AA* 78 (1963), 328–60, fig. 3; C. Mango, *Byzantine Architecture*, paperback, 2nd ed. (New York, 1985), 52, fig. 69.

[25] On the tetraconch cathedral see Spanner and Guyer, *Rusafa*, 52–55, pls. 13–16; Kollwitz, ibid. For illustration of its interior see Mango, *Byzantine Architecture*, fig. 69.

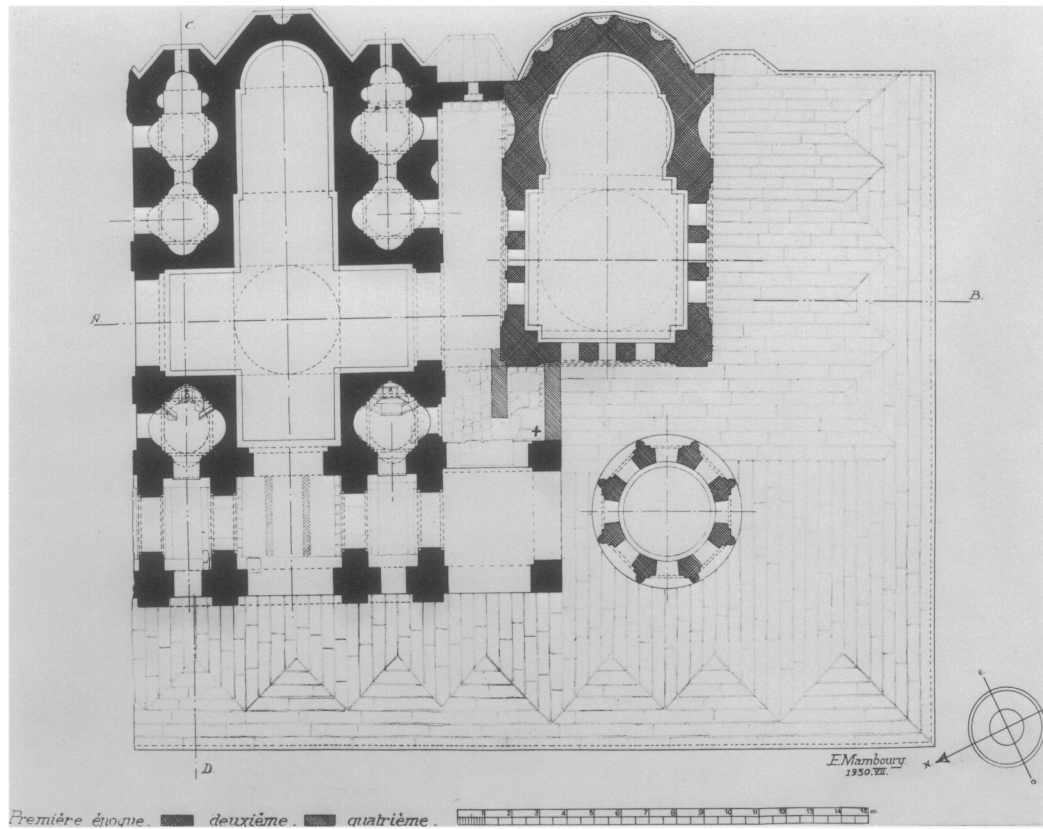[26] Spanner and Guyer, *Rusafa*, 56–62, pl. 25.

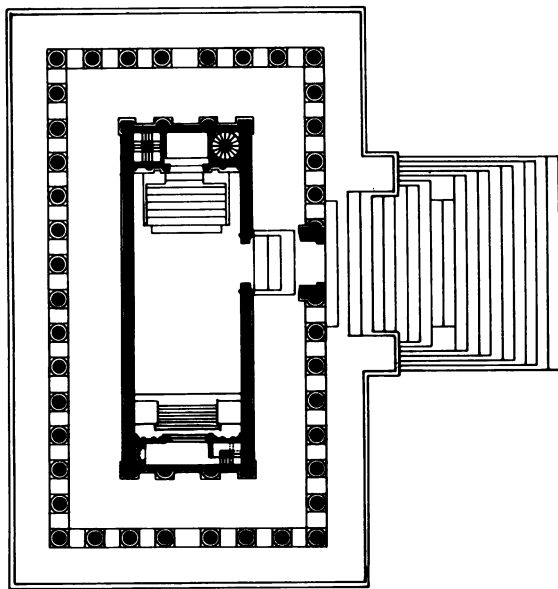[27] Ibid., 38–42, pl. 27.

[28] Ibid., pl. 25, section G–H.
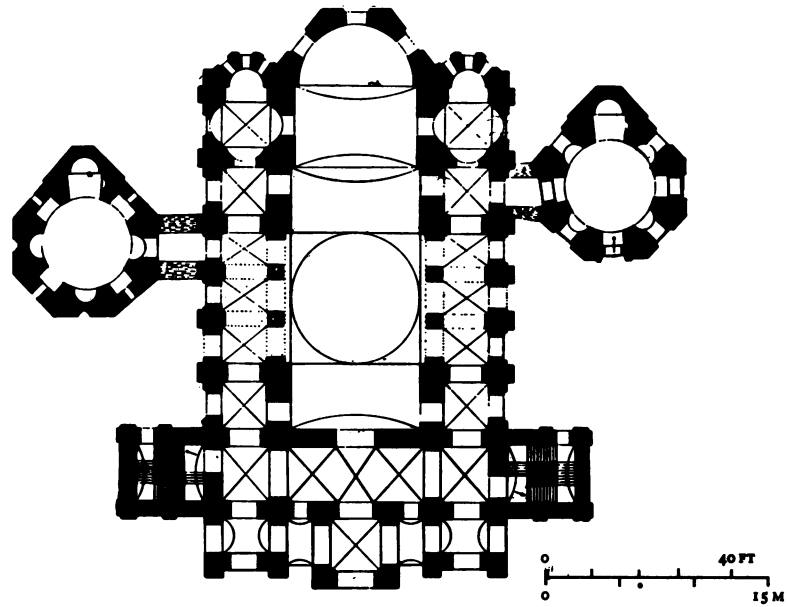
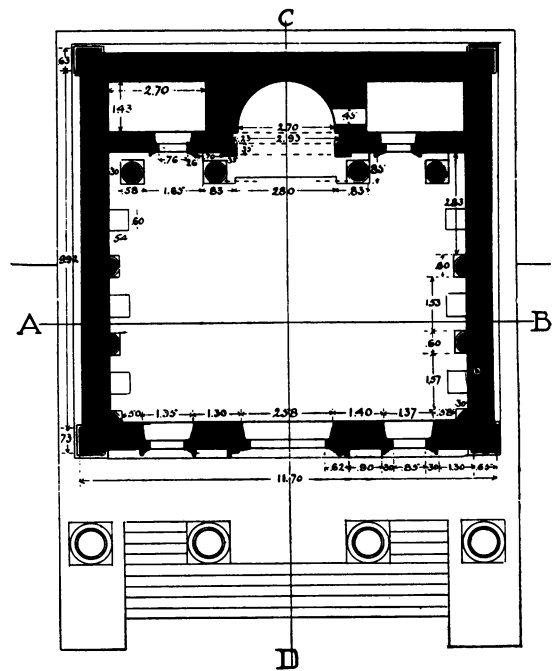1 Dereağzı, church, ground plan (after H. Rott)

2 Constantinople, Monastery of Constantine Lips, north church,
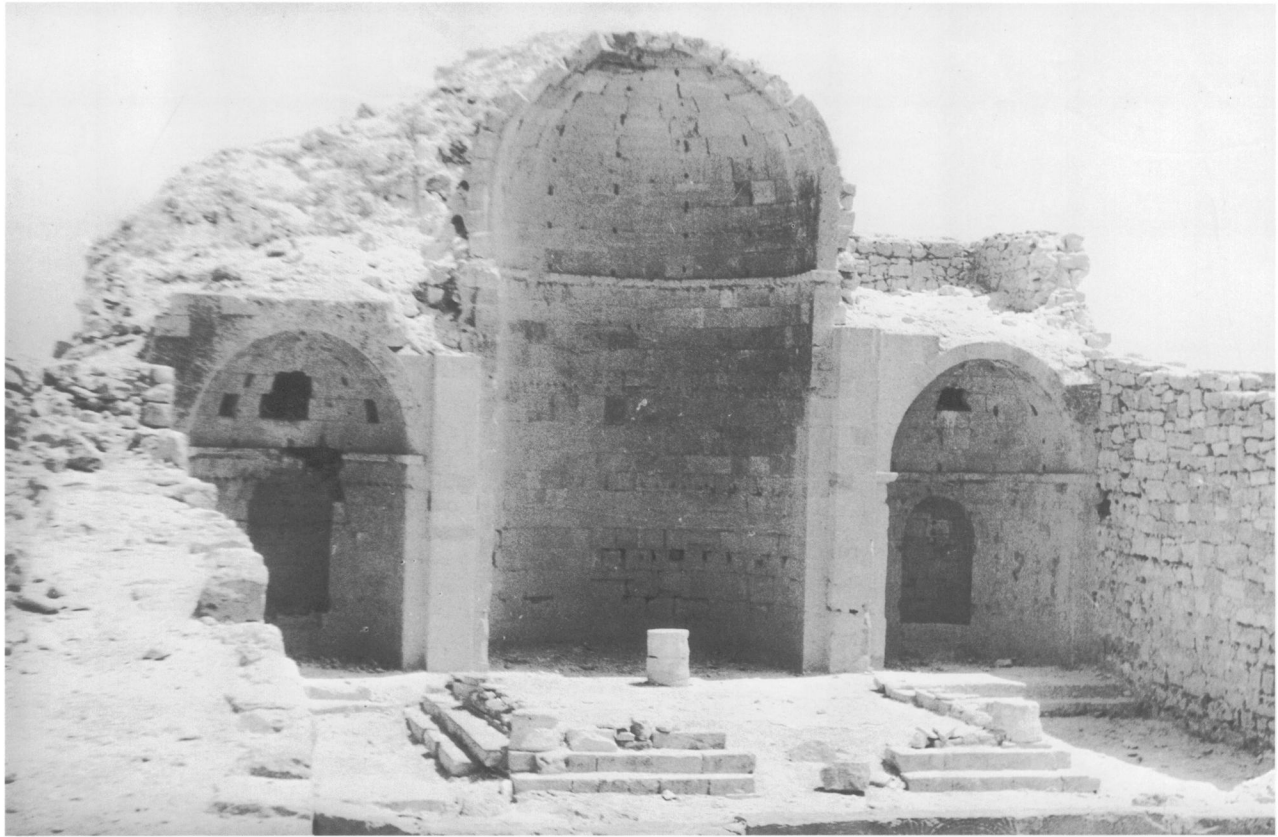southwest roof chapel (photo: courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks)

3   Constantinople, Monastery of Constantine Lips, north church, plan, gallery level
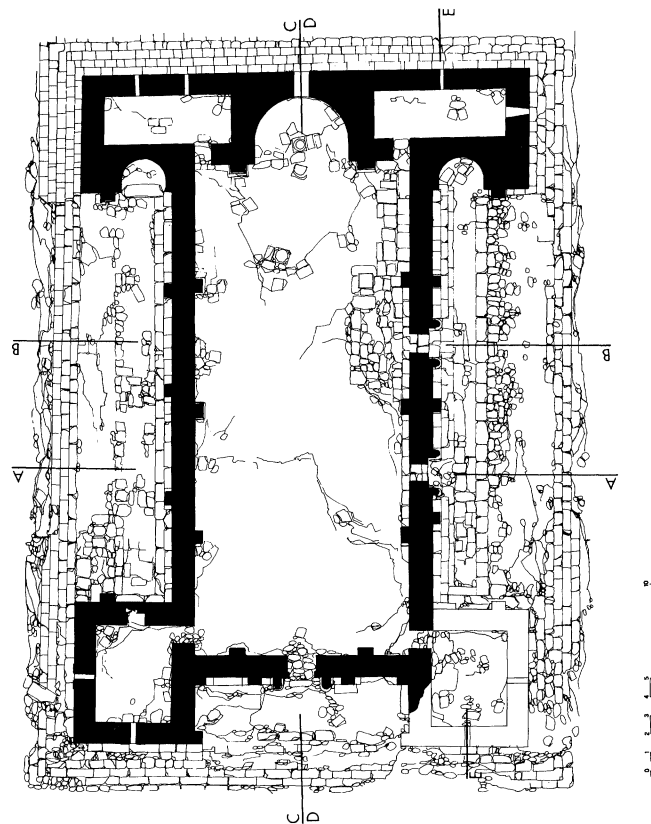   (after E. Mamboury)

4a   Is-Sanamen, temple of Tyche, ground plan
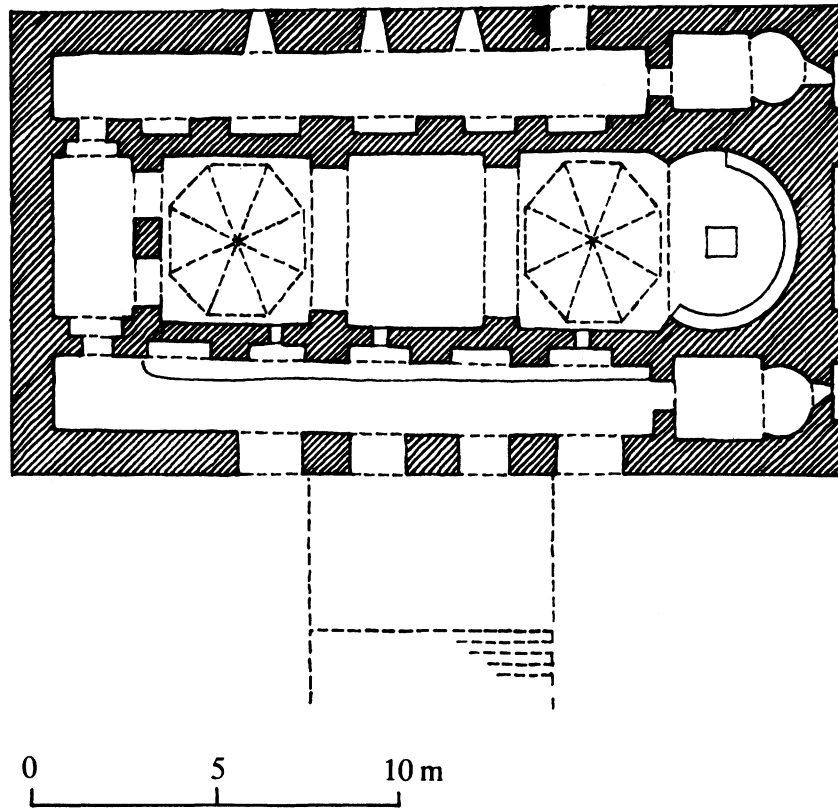   (after H. C. Butler)
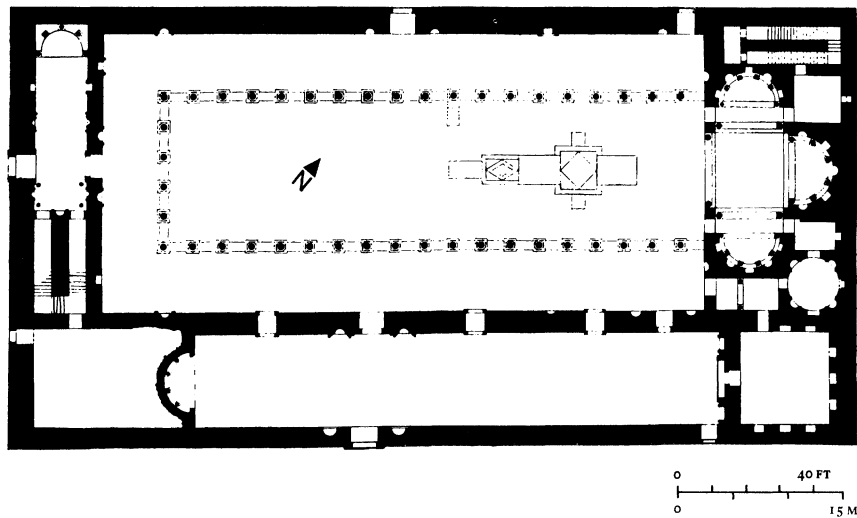

4b   Palmyra, temple of Bel (after R. Amy)

5   Avdot, Shivta, north church, looking east

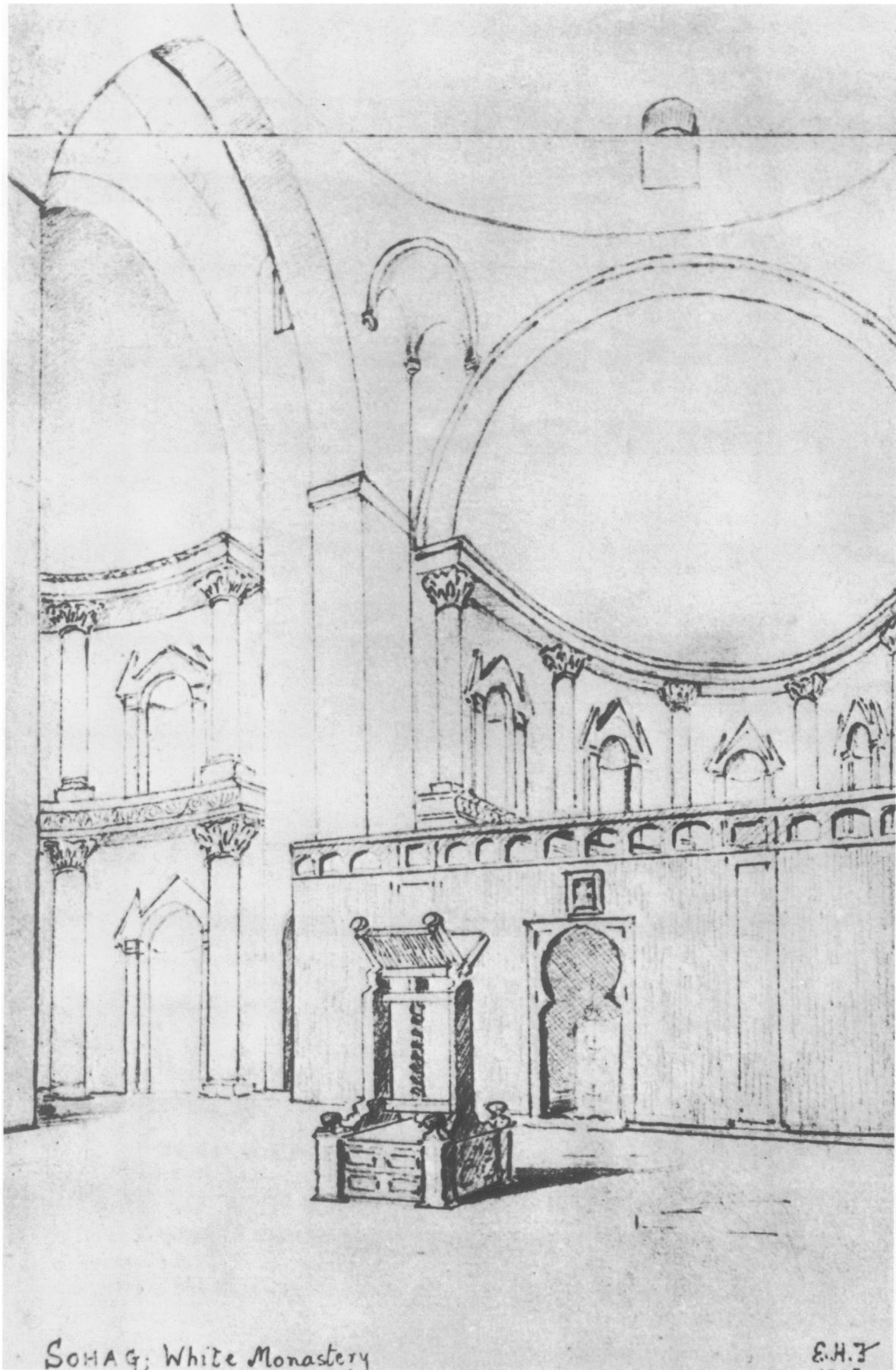
6   Ereruk, basilica, ground plan (after P. Cuneo)

0   5   10 m

7   Gurjaani, basilica, plan of the gallery level
     (after Mepisaschwili-Zinzadse)

0   40 FT
0   15 M

8   Deir el-Abiad (White Monastery), ground
     plan (after U. Monneret de Villard)

SOHAG; White Monastery

E.H.F

9 Deir el-Abiad (White Monastery), triconch (drawing by Freshfield, courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks)
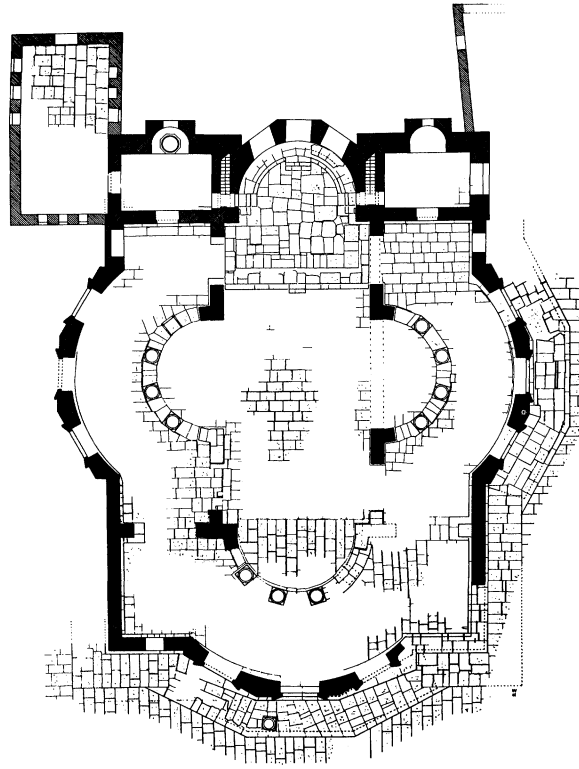
10 Rusafa, tetraconch, ground plan
(after J. Kollwitz)

11 Rusafa, tetraconch, interior looking east (photo: courtesy of Dumbarton Oaks)

13 Akura, church of St. David,
plan of the gallery level (re-
drawn after G. Chubinashvili)

12 Akura, church of St. David, ground plan
(redrawn after G. Chubinashvili)
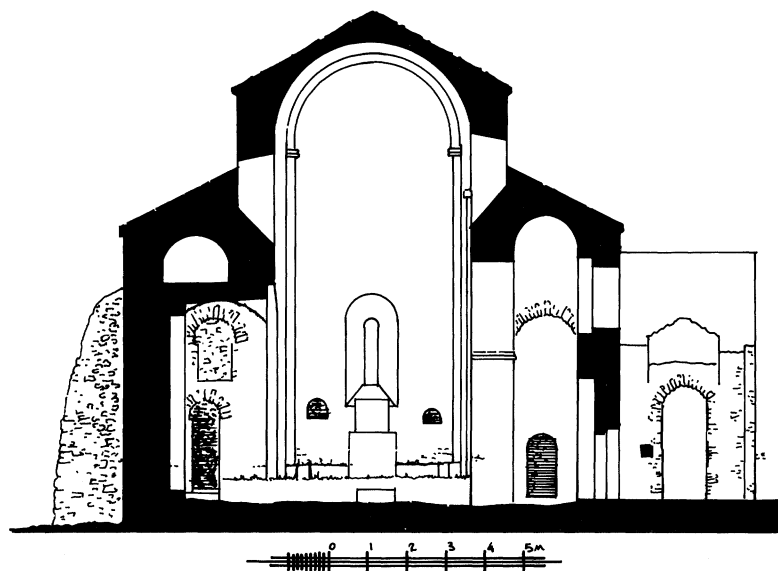
14 Akura, church of St. David, elevation (redrawn after
G. Chubinashvili)
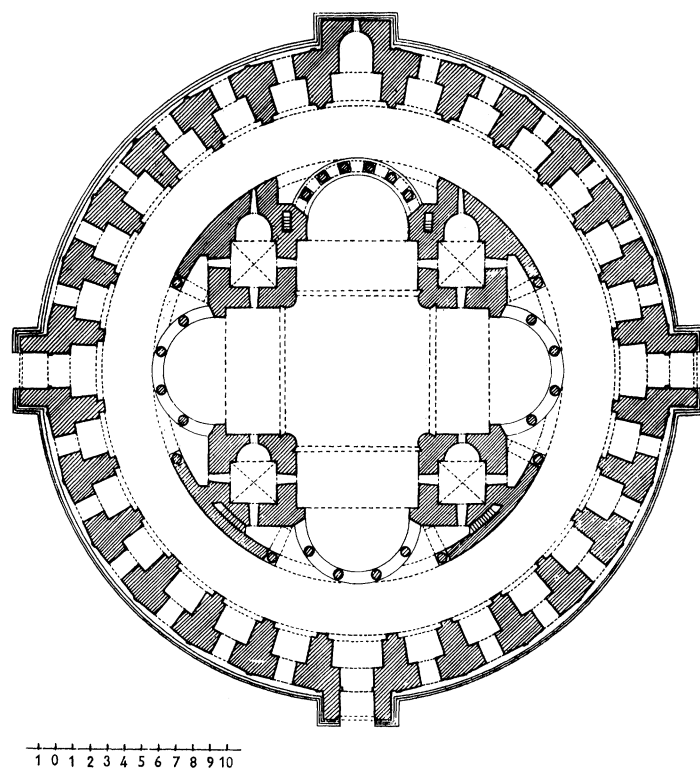
15 Penek (Bana), cathedral, ground plan
    (after Mepisaschwili-Zinzadse)
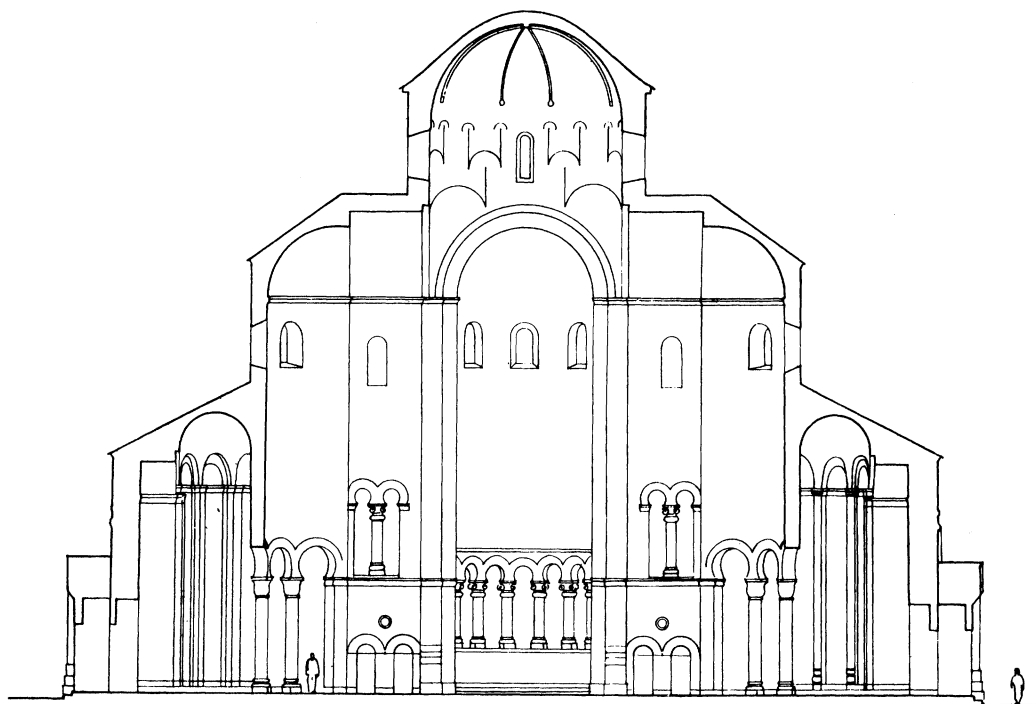
16 Penek (Bana), cathedral, elevation, looking east (after Mepisaschwili-Zinzadse)

17 Penek (Bana), cathedral, looking east, level of the second- and third-story chapels (after Mepisaschwili-Zinzadse)
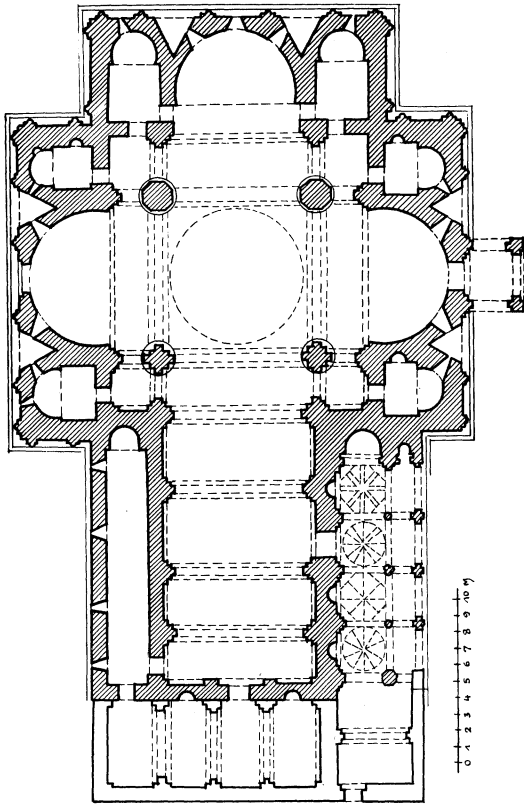
18 Oshki, cathedral, ground plan
(after Mepisaschwili-Zinzadse)
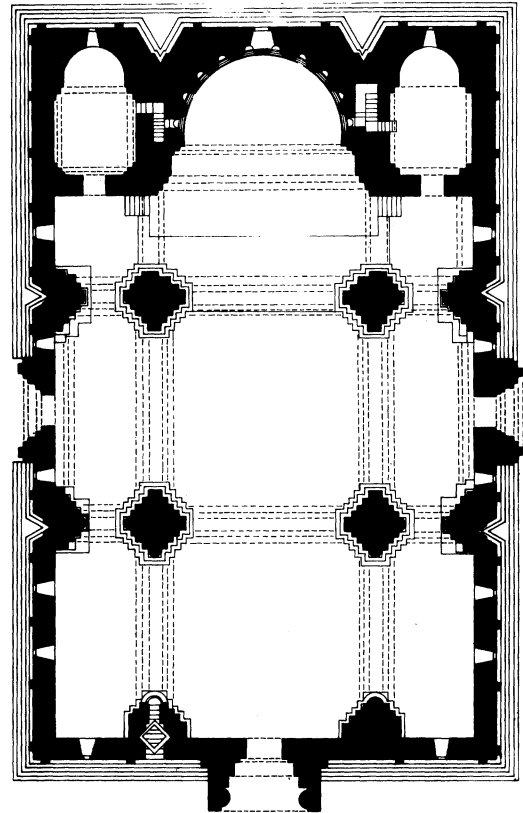
19 Ani, cathedral, ground plan
(after P. Cuneo)
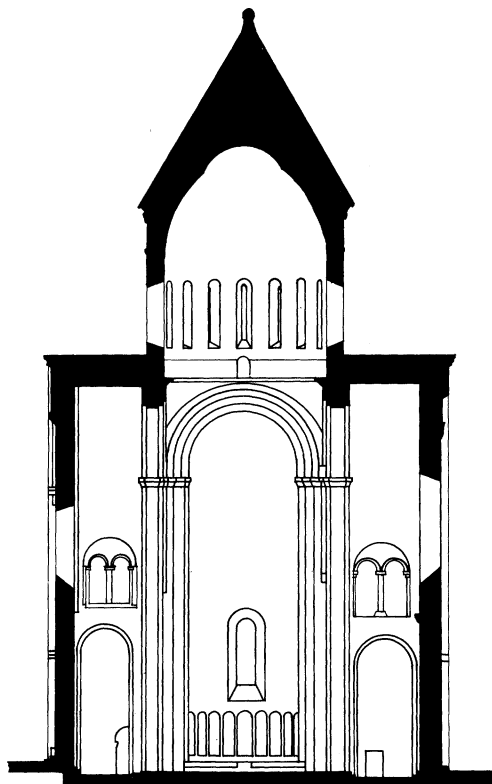
20 Sveti-Tskhoveli, cathedral, elevation,
looking east (after A. Alpago-Novello)

chapels in all of the above-mentioned churches at Rusafa is specifically Syrian in origin.[29] In discussing these tower-chapels it is common for art historians to explain this phenomenon simply as a matter of a stylistic development in Syrian architecture. It is doubtful that this widespread use of the tower-chapel throughout Syria and elsewhere in the Christian East occurred merely because it added to the monumental character of the building. All the chambers are restricted in size and access and some preserve remains of liturgical furnishings such as apses and portions of stylobates, which seems to indicate that these chambers were reserved for private liturgical use by the clergy. The development of the tower-chapel in Syria is thus architecturally the same as the towerlike two-story *martyria*, where the lower chambers were used for burials and the upper ones as chapels for commemorative services.[30]

Churches in the Caucasus developed a more compact two-story chapel arrangement contained within the body of the church. At the eastern end of an Armenian cupola-hall church at Ptghni, dated to the late sixth or early seventh century, two upper-story chapels are linked to the sanctuary.[31] Though the building is ruined, the remains of the northeast second-story chapel still exist. Access to these chapels is not clear, but there is no evidence that they were separated from the central part of the church, and it is likely that they were linked with the chapels on the lower level. The surviving hall in the northeast vault suggests that initially there must have been some sort of wooden stairway leading to the upper chambers.

Another way of joining the upper-story chapels to the lower ones appears in the two-domed basilica of St. David at Akura in the region of Kakheti in Georgia, dated to 855.[32] The central apse in this church has four niches and contains an altar (Fig.

12). The lateral rooms have prothesis niches, the south one also preserving an altar. The south room has no communication with the central apse, whereas the north one has a passageway in its south wall. The presence of apses, prothesis niches, and an altar indicates the use of these rooms as additional liturgical space. Thus the upper-story chapels were primarily used as chapels (Fig. 13), and, despite some later alterations, the apses and prothesis niches were probably part of the liturgical furnishings:[33] the niche in the north wall of the south chapel still exists. Both chapels are similar in plan, but their means of communication with those on the ground level are different. Unfortunately the stairway leading to the north upper-story chapel has not been preserved. The north roof chapel originally had a doorway to the north aisle, which is now blocked, and one must suppose one approached it by a wooden stairway on the outer wall of the lower chapel facing the north aisle (Fig. 14).[34] In contrast, the south roof chapel communicates with the chapel below through a stairway starting in a niche in the western wall.[35] The liturgical arrangement of the lower chapels near the central apse suggests that they could be used only by the clergy. Like the central apse, the south apse has an altar. The north upper-story chapel originally had access to the north aisle of the church; the south one communicated only with the south chapel on the lower level. This variation in access is probably due to the private use of these chapels by members of the clergy.

Some upper-story chapels with complex designs exist in the Caucasus area. There are four-story chapels in the Georgian church at Penek (Bana), which was constructed during the reign of Adarnase IV (888–923) (Fig. 15).[36] The church is a tetraconch enveloped by an ambulatory,[37] a plan that is well known from Early Christian and Armenian architecture. The chapels are set in the central piers of the tetraconch (Fig. 15). These massive

[29] For examples of towerlike chapels in Syrian architecture, see Butler, *Early Churches in Syria*, 23, 24, and fig. 24; 41 and fig. 45; 88, 89 and fig. 91; 89, 90 and fig. 92; 90, 91 and fig. 93; 148, 149 and fig. 158.

[30] The practice of building tomb-chapel *martyria* in Syria was noted by J. Lassus, *Sanctuaires chrétiens de Syrie* (Paris, 1947), 112–25. For illustrations of the two-story tombs in Syria see C. J. de Vogüé, *Syrie centrale: Architecture civile et religieuse du I*^{er} *au VII*^e *siècle* (Paris, 1865), I, pl. 26; II, pls. 72, 75, 103.

[31] S. Mhatsakanian, K. Oganesian, and A. Sinian, *Ocherki po istorii arkhitekturi drevnei i srednevekovoi Armenii* (Erevan, 1978), 108, 109. For illustrations see S. Mhatsakanian and N. Stepanian, *Pamyatniki arkhitektury sovietskoi Armenii* (Leningrad, 1971), pl. 22 and plan on p. 50.

[32] Chubinashvili, *Arkhitektura Kakhetii*, 110–23, figs. 111, 112; M–Z, *Die Kunst des alten Georgien*, 231; Alpago-Novello et al., *Art and Architecture in Medieval Georgia*, 272.

[33] Chubinashvili, ibid.

[34] Ibid., fig. on p. 113.

[35] Ibid., fig. on p. 114.

[36] V. Beridze, "Iskusstvo Gruzii," *Istoriya iskusstva narodov SSSR IV–XIII vekov* (Moscow, 1973), 184–86. For illustrations see M–Z, *Die Kunst des alten Georgien*, 94–98. Cf. the recent report on the condition of this church: R. W. Edwards, "Medieval Architecture in the Oltu-Penek Valley: A Preliminary Report on the Marchlands of Northeast Turkey," *DOP* 39 (1985), 27–32, figs. 38, 50, 51.

[37] There are three examples that may be cited as prototypes for the design of the church at Bana: S. Lorenzo in Milan (ca. 352–375), the cathedral at Lekit (5th and 6th centuries) in Azerbaijan, U.S.S.R., and Zvart'noc' (7th century) in Armenia.

piers were hollow and contained four-story chapels with connecting stairways.[38] Although the piers have completely collapsed, the chapels can be seen in old photographs and plans.[39] The eastern piers containing the four-story chapels are still standing, and they have chapels that are, for the most part, preserved (Figs. 16, 17). The chapels on the fourth story have collapsed, but apsidal niches still remain. All the chapels are of the same small size and are provided with apses at the eastern end. Architecturally, they are integrated with the interior of the church and separate the interior space from the ambulatory. Four tiny chapels on the ground level were entered through little doorways in the western wall. These chapels are isolated from the main church and have shallow windows in the south, north, and east walls. The chapels on the upper story originally had double colonnaded openings which are seen in the old photographs, although the chapels are now destroyed for the most part. It is difficult to know the purpose of such a chapel design. Their limited space and means of access made these chapels inaccessible to the general public. The lower- and upper-story rooms allowed participation in services held in the main church. The choice of design obviously originated with the patron. Whatever the use of these chapels may have been, their large number here provides a new architectural concept. No doubt the need for private cells lies behind this synthesis.

Second-story chapels fit within triconch plans in a number of Georgian and Armenian churches. Examples of Georgian churches include Sveti-Tskhoveli in Mtskheta (eleventh century) and Oshki in Tao-Klarjeti.[40] At Oshki four two-story chapels are incorporated into the triconch plan (Fig. 18).[41] The innovation here consisted of small two-story chapels set between the apses of the triconch so that each side of the triconch had a tripartite arrangement. This allowed for an increase in the number of chapels within the same building.

This symmetrical arrangement of two-story chapels has its roots in the early architecture of the Christian East, for example, the cathedral at Rusafa mentioned above. Although the increasing development of second-story chapels in Armenia and Georgia during the tenth and eleventh centuries shows great innovation in their architectural arrangements, one can see, by looking at some of the upper-story arrangements and their access, that the Early Christian system was familiar to architects.

An Armenian cathedral at Ani (889–1006), built by the famous architect Trdat, may perhaps illustrate the links between the eastern pair of upper-story chapels and their Early Christian predecessors (Fig. 19).[42] The stairways located within the thickness of the lateral walls of the sanctuary and leading to the second-story chambers seem similar to the arrangement of the tetraconch cathedral at Rusafa. Stairways connecting upper-story chapels with the chapels on the lower level are also found in churches such as that of T'oros I at Anavarza (1111) or that of Constable Smbat (1251) at Çandır, both in Armenian Cilicia, the eleventh-century cathedral of Sveti-Tskhoveli in Mtskheta, the cathedral at Alaverdi, and St. James in Jerusalem (Fig. 20).[43] This system of communication between the chapels has frequently been used, especially in large cathedrals where massive walls allow the inclusion of such stairs.

In the Middle Byzantine period it became common for upper-story chapels to have windows opening onto the sanctuary and large semicircular double windows divided by colonnettes opening onto the central space of the church; an early example can be seen in the church at Bana (Fig. 17). Windows of this kind seem to be inspired by the double or triple arcade openings in the galleries of Early Christian churches, for instance, Hagia Sophia in Istanbul and S. Vitale in Ravenna.[44] For

---

[38] N. P. Severov, *Pamyatniki gruzinskogo zodchestva* (Moscow, 1947), 190, 191. For illustrations of the plan and elevation see M–Z, *Die Kunst des alten Georgien*, 138, 139; see also Edwards, "Medieval Architecture in the Oltu-Penek Valley," 28. Similar upper-story chapels at the eastern end of the triconch plan are in the Bagrad cathedral at Kutaisi and the cathedral at Alaverdi dated to the early 11th century.

[39] Severov, *Pamyatniki,*

[40] For illustrations of the plans of Oshki see M–Z, *Die Kunst des alten Georgien*, 138, 139; see also Severov, *Pamyatniki*, 190, 191. The description of the upper-story chapel arrangement and its access to the lower level in Sveti-Tskhoveli (with a plan and elevation) is published by Severov, 176–78.

[41] Severov, *Pamyatniki*, 190, 191.

[42] For the plan of Ani see P. Cuneo et al., *Ani*, 12 (Venice, 1984), fig. on p. 97.

[43] R. W. Edwards, "Ecclesiastical Architecture in the Fortifications of Armenian Cilicia," *DOP* 36 (1982), 156–64, figs. 1, 6, 10. It is difficult to know what type of stairway connected the upper-story chapels with the lower level of the church in the cathedral at Kutaisi. Two-story chapels at the eastern end of this church are partially preserved, and some sort of stairway must have originally existed. Their present condition can be seen in the photographs published by Alpago-Novello et al., *Art and Architecture in Medieval Georgia*, 362, 363, fig. 399. For the plan of Sveti-Tskhoveli see Severov, *Pamyatniki*, 176–78. For the plan of Alaverdi see M–Z, *Die Kunst des alten Georgien*, 146.

[44] For the illustration of the double and triple arcade openings near the sanctuary in the churches of H. Sophia and S. Vitale, see Mango, *Byzantine Architecture*, figs. 89, 103.

some reason the type of double window openings at Bana reappears in several Georgian churches such as Oshki, Sveti-Tskhoveli (1029), and the cathedral of Alaverdi (eleventh century) (Fig. 20).[45] Large window openings onto the nave and sanctuary allow a person in the chapel to observe the celebration of the liturgy both in the sanctuary and in the nave. However, window openings onto the sanctuary suggest that, for the general public, access to these chapels was restricted.

One can therefore describe the independent chapel arrangement as a more flexible system of communication which can easily be utilized in different planning designs. In the church architecture of the Christian East, particularly in Armenia and Georgia, galleries were rare, and access to the second-story chapels had to be by individual staircases or stairways. Independent arrangement of the stairways approaching upper-story chapels was common near the sanctuary in churches with a central plan and, as we have already seen, for cross-in-square churches like the Theotokos of Lips in Constantinople.

These multi-story chapels near the central apse have their architectural origin in Roman design. Such chapels are found in many different areas of the Christian East, and continued to be built in the seventh and eighth centuries; they appear frequently in churches of the Middle Byzantine period and, in particular, in Armenia and Georgia. The wide diffusion of these chapels throughout Early and Middle Byzantine church architecture raises the question of their function.

The second-story chapels were elevated above the chambers on the ground floor. Hence, it is necessary first to outline what we know about the function of the lower chambers. In discussing Byzantine churches of any period, it has been customary among Byzantinists to designate these lateral chambers as prothesis and diakonikon,[46] but in fact they served various purposes, as shown by research on churches in Syria, Egypt, or Armenia.[47]

Here the chambers near the central apse usually functioned as separate sanctuaries. According to G. Descoeudres,[48] there were no rules for the use of these lateral rooms near the central sanctuary in northern and southern Syria, nor was there any evidence on the fixed location of the prothesis and diakonikon rooms. Before the Arab invasion some churches in southern Syria used side rooms as sacristies; others, particularly in the north, used them as baptisteries or *martyria*. He also noted that similar rooms sometimes had other uses.[49] After the Arab invasion the lateral corner chambers near the sanctuary in Syrian churches were dedicated to the martyrs,[50] but this also means that they were used as additional sanctuaries for celebrating the liturgy. When he compared the lateral rooms in Syrian churches with those of the Middle Byzantine churches in Constantinople, Descoeudres cited literary sources indicating that there as well there were no strict rules.[51] P. B. Bagatti also noticed the plurality of altars in early Palestinian churches but did not explain their function.[52] In the liturgical planning of Cappadocian churches there are also no prothesis or diakonikon rooms found.[53] Cappadocian church architecture is characterized by multiple sanctuaries in the same nave or chapels opened to the nave. We need to know more about the function of the lateral rooms near the central apse in the churches of Constantinople and the Byzantine provinces, but the second-story rooms can be distinguished as chapels. Their special layout on the upper story prevents them from being used as prothesis and diakonikon or as burial places. The surviving remains of liturgical furnishings in some of the chapels also suggest that they

---

[45] For illustrations of the windows in the church at Oshki and in Sveti-Tskhoveli see above, note 39.

[46] This designation was first suggested by Josef Braun, *Der christliche Altar*, 2 vols. (Munich, 1924), and was based mainly on later sources. He did not provide a critical analysis of literary sources and archeological data for various Byzantine regions.

[47] Regarding Coptic churches in Egypt Butler pointed out that lateral rooms near the central sanctuary were used as separate sanctuaries on the feast of the Exaltation of the Cross. On these days more than a single celebration of the liturgy is required. Coptic canon law forbids a second celebration of the liturgy on the same altar within the same day. Butler also mentioned a similar custom of having three or more sanctuaries in

the churches of the Christian East such as Syria and Armenia: A. J. Butler, *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt*, 2nd ed. (Oxford, 1970), 23–25. For the use of altars in Armenian churches see E. F. Fortesque, *The Armenian Church* (London, 1872), 118–20, 122, 123. In a recent article J. M. Thierry collected examples of double apse churches in Armenia, some of which have preserved original altars in two apses. He suggested that perhaps the funerary purpose of these monuments dictated their double apses; see J. M. Thierry, "Les églises arméniennes à double abside," *REArm* 18 (1984), 515–35 and figs. on pp. 536–47. No liturgical sources, however, have been cited to interpret this phenomenon.

[48] G. Descoeudres, *Die Pastophorien im syrobyzantinischen Osten* (Wiesbaden, 1983), esp. 3–79.

[49] Ibid., 75.

[50] Ibid., 75, 76.

[51] Ibid., 69–75.

[52] P. B. Bagatti, *L'Eglise de la gentilé en Palestine (I–XI siècle)* (Jerusalem, 1968), 221.

[53] N. T. Teteriatnikov, *Liturgical Planning of the Byzantine Churches in Cappadocia*, diss. (New York University, 1987), esp. 15–66.

were specifically reserved for private liturgies for the clergy. The chapels sometimes lack altars, but wooden portable altars were used as well as stone ones. In 723–726 the pilgrim Willibald, visiting Bethlehem, observed the use of a portable altar in the Grotto of the Nativity for the celebration of the liturgy.[54] Bagatti cited several literary sources that mentioned the use of portable altars in Palestinian churches.[55] With regard to Egypt, A. J. Butler noted that portable altars made of wood were rare but used in Coptic churches.[56]

One factor seems important for understanding the liturgical use of these upper-story chapels for the clergy: celebrating the liturgy in private.

In his recent article Mathews called attention to the importance of the private liturgy in the development of private chapels in Byzantine architecture. He brought to our attention two texts from the *Life* of St. John the Almsgiver which illustrate that, at the beginning of the seventh century, private liturgies were celebrated in private oratories both in a domestic setting and in the bishop's residence.[57] The existence of multi-story chapels of an earlier date points, however, to the fact that the custom of private liturgies was rooted in much earlier tradition. Although they are scarce, there are some literary sources that provide evidence for the celebration of the liturgy in private by members of the clergy.

While the Christian church in the West, as well as in the East, celebrated the liturgy regularly on Sundays, monks, clergy, and faithful received communion daily in their private oratories. According to St. Basil, fourth-century monks in the desert communicated daily from the sacraments reserved in their own cells.[58] The liturgy was also widely celebrated privately in homes in the Christian West as well as in the East. Thus we hear that St. Ambrose celebrated mass in the house of a noble matron when he came to Rome.[59] St. Gregory of Nazianzus set up a private chapel, dedicated to St. Anastasia, in his private house in Constantinople where he

celebrated the liturgy.[60] From the *Life* of Melania the Younger we also learn of the existence of private oratories used for private liturgies. Melania built a small oratory in her monastery "and she placed an altar [there], that she might derive advantage from the divine mysteries."[61] Additional information on the use of this oratory comes from the *Life* of the Georgian monk Peter the Iberian, who lived during her lifetime. The author tells us that the monk Gerontius said three masses on feast days, but "on other days Gerontius celebrated in private for the blessed Melania according to the usage of churches in Rome."[62] When Peter came to Alexandria, he celebrated the divine service in secret.[63]

On the other hand, some literary sources suggest that church officials increasingly opposed the private celebration of the liturgy. The first canon of the Council of Dvin (551), as found in the Armenian *Kanonagirkʿ*, prohibits setting up altars and celebrating the liturgy in the homes of the clergy.[64] This shows an attempt to confine the role of the clergy as well as the liturgy to the public church building. Private oratories located within it may have been the compromise in this struggle; they provided for private devotional worship yet acknowledged that this must take place in the consecrated public church building. This factor seems to have provided an impetus for the flourishing of private oratories in monasteries and churches. The growth of monasticism in Egypt, Syria, and Palestine in the fourth and fifth centuries put an emphasis on the regulation of monastic devotional life.

The adoption of the monastic practice of celebrating the liturgy in private among clergy grew gradually through imitation of that tradition from the practice of the major liturgical centers. The authority of liturgical practice in the churches of Palestine, Egypt, and Syria was important for establishing liturgical traditions in neighboring Christian countries. The continuous use of second-story chapels in the architecture of Georgia and Armenia demonstrates the contact that their

---

[54] *Early Travels in Palestine*, ed. T. Wright (New York, 1968), 19. According to Egeria, on Good Friday, on Golgotha and behind the rock in a chapel, a portable table was used for the desposition of the reliquary with the wooden fragments of the Holy Cross; E. D. Hunt, *Later Roman Empire AD 312–460* (Oxford, 1982), 116.

[55] Bagatti, *L'Eglise de la gentilé*, 222.

[56] Butler, *The Ancient Coptic Churches of Egypt*, 25–28.

[57] Mathews, "'Private' Liturgy," 136.

[58] D. G. Dix, *The Shape of the Liturgy* (London, rpr. 1979), 326.

[59] J. A. Jungmann, *The Early Liturgy* (Notre Dame, Ind., 1959), 279.

[60] G. Dagron, *Naissance d'une capitale: Constantinople et ses institutions de 330 à 451* (Paris, 1974), 448 and note 5; see also *Or.* XXVI, 17, PG 35, col. 1249. P. Galley, *La vie de saint Grégoire de Nazianze* (Lyons-Paris, 1943), 137, 138.

[61] Bagatti, *L'Eglise de la gentilé*, 261.

[62] Ibid., 71.

[63] R. Raabe, *Petrus der Iberer* (Leipzig, 1895), 59, sec. 58.

[64] *Kanonagirkʿ Hayocʿ*, ed. V. Hakobean (Erevan, 1964), I, 478. I am grateful to Prof. Thomas F. Mathews for bringing this text to my attention and to Prof. Robert Thomson for its translation.

churches had with the monasteries of the Christian East and, in particular, Palestine.

Armenian and Georgian monks had contacts with Palestinian monasteries as early as the fourth century.[65] They went on pilgrimages, developed monastic training, and founded their own monasteries and chapels in Jerusalem and the Holy Land in order to be a dynamic part of the liturgical activities of Palestinian monasticism. Literary sources and archeological investigation provide evidence that by the early fifth century the Georgians had established twenty monasteries in and around Jerusalem.[66] Peter the Iberian and John the Eunuch were the first to build a hostel and Iberian monastery on the banks of the Jordan. The monastery of St. Saba became a place for the monastic formation of Georgian monks and clergy, and they were particularly active there during the eighth, ninth, and tenth centuries.[67] St. David of Gareja, one of the Syrian fathers who helped establish monasticism in Georgia, also came to Jerusalem with some of his monks for monastic formation during the time of Patriarch Elias (494–513).[68] Armenian monks were frequently recorded as visitors of Palestinian monasteries. For example, in 501 some Armenian monks joined St. Saba's congregation for the liturgy, and they also had their own chapel in the monastery of St. Theodosius.[69] During the seventh and eighth centuries Georgian and Armenian monks continued to maintain their close ties with the Holy Land. In a recent article R. Thomson also shows the role of Jerusalem for the Armenian monastic and cultural tradition and especially for literature.[70]

With regard to the liturgy, Georgian liturgical tradition was deeply rooted in the Palestinian tradition.[71] For example, a Georgian monk, Gregory of Khandzta (759–861), brought from Jerusalem to his homeland a copy of the Rule of St. Saba which became the basis for that of Georgian ecclesiastical foundations. Jerusalem liturgical texts such as the Lectionary or Kanonar became a part of Georgian liturgical books. In spite of the persecution of Monophysites in Jerusalem, as well as the Persian invasion of the city in 614, the Georgian and Armenian churches maintained their close ties with Palestine and Sinai during the seventh, eighth, and ninth centuries and throughout the Middle Ages.

The presence of upper-story chapels in the architecture of the Caucasus in the sixth, seventh, and eighth centuries and the Middle Byzantine period illustrates the well-established tradition of small private chapels for the clergy which were common in the early churches of the Christian East. No examples of such chapels have survived among the early churches of Constantinople. In fact, tripartite design of the eastern end of the church becomes common in Constantinopolitan architecture only after the period of Iconoclasm, and that is when we first encounter second-story chapels near the central apse in the church of the Theotokos of the monastery of Lips in Constantinople and the church of Dereağzı in Asia Minor. Scholars have already noted the significance of Armenian architecture for Middle Byzantine church design. With regard to the upper-story chapels, the architecture of the Caucasus might well provide the transition between the architectural and liturgical tradition of the early churches of the Christian East and the Middle Byzantine church architecture of Constantinople and its provinces.

Dumbarton Oaks

[65] S. Peter Cowe, "Pilgrimage to Jerusalem by the Eastern Churches," *Wallfahrt kennt keine Grenzen* (Zurich, 1984), 321. P. Maraval, *Lieux saints et pèlerinages d'Orient* (Paris, 1985), 112, 113.

[66] K. Salia, *History of the Georgian Nation* (Paris, 1983), esp. 77–80; M. E. Stone, "An Armenian Pilgrim to the Holy Land in the Early Byzantine Era," *REArm* 18 (1984), 173–78.

[67] Salia, ibid.

[68] Cowe, "Pilgrimage," 321.

[69] Ibid.

[70] R. W. Thomson, "Jerusalem and Armenia," *Studia patristica* 18.1 (1985), 77–91.

[71] M. Van Esbroeck, "Eglise géorgienne des origines au Moyen Age," *BK* 40 (1982), 195–96.